



Summer 2010 Newsletter

Public Art Saint Paul • Creating and Caring for Art in Saint Paul's Civic Realm

WING YOUNG HUIE

The University Avenue Project

A Project(ion) site with a 40-foot screen is the centerpiece of The University Avenue Project. Next to the Town House Bar and across the street from Wal-Mart, this empty car lot is a new town square where the community gathers every Wednesday through Sunday for twilight showings of Wing Young Huie's images, accompanied by a soundtrack by local musicians. Beyond, six miles of Saint Paul's central thoroughfare have been transformed into a public art gallery: 250 of Wing's images are displayed in 80 streetfront venues and large scale murals can be seen for miles.

Public Art Saint Paul commissioned Wing to create this project in 2007 with an important Joyce

Foundation Award. Four years, 20,000 photographs, and abundant community contributions later, The University Avenue Project opened on May 1st and will run through October 31st.

The projection show begins at twilight every Wednesday through Sunday. On Wednesdays, Wing holds community conversations before the show. On the last Saturday of every month, community cabarets feature the

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community's talent. The programs are free and open to the public.

The Minnesota Historical Society has published a 2-volume book. Thousands of students K-college are engaged in an expansive education program. Public Art Saint Paul President Christine Podas-Larson explains, "Wing's artistic vision has inspired us and it is so true that it has taken a village to pull it all together."

The photographs expose the complexity that lies behind seemingly simple daily activities. Wing visited businesses, community organizations, and nine schools,



including an adult learning center where over fifty countries are represented. He asked his subjects probing questions: "What are you?" and "How do you think others see you?" and "How has race affected you?" Responses were written on handheld chalkboards, and subjects posed for photographs showing their faces...and their most intimate secrets.

Wing hoped to capture the reality of University Avenue. "There's a lot of stigma attached to the Avenue. The perceptions people have don't match up to the reality," Wing said. "What I'm showing is what it looks like. I'm like a tour guide."

A seasoned tour guide at that. *The University Avenue Project* is Wing's third photographic survey of a local urban community, preceded by *Frogtown* in 1995 and *Lake Street USA* in 2000. Wing realized how vast University Avenue felt compared to Lake Street. He wondered how he would "fill it up." While the streetfront venues offer a closer and individual experience, the murals and projection show boldly address thoroughfare's scale.

Podas-Larson says the show invites re-visitation. "Sometimes, it's like being at a wedding because it's very happy and filled with hundreds of people. Other times, the projection puts you in a quiet, contemplative place where it's just you and the images."



"There are art viewers. Curiosity seekers. Community-minded people. Who knows why people come to see it? It's a social experiment," Wing said. Sometimes, the avenue's residents thank him. One woman told him, "People don't know us. They don't know what it's like." At a Wednesday with Wing event, audience member Terry commented, "When I first started seeing these pictures they caught my eye, I couldn't get enough. I'm up and down University all the time and it's kind of like it's brightened it up. It's like looking at another part of people's lives. Some things that you see, some things that you don't see." One father extended his arms to hug the image of his son on a 20-foot banner.

"Wing Young Huie is an important artist whose vision is one for our community and

for humanity. The impact of what he has created will be carried in people's memories," says Podas-Larson. "Now is the time to be there – these months are passing so quickly. Now is the time to experience sitting on benches in an open lot on University with people you never met and sharing the powerful experience of seeing this show. If you're here between now and October 31, you will never lose this – it will be part of you and maybe even change you forever."

Learn more at
WWW.THEUNIVERSITYAVENUEPROJECT.COM



SUMMER HIGHLIGHT

Western Sculpture Park

Western Sculpture Park is the central gathering place for people of this neighborhood just west of the state Capitol. Public Art Saint Paul has produced the sculpture exhibition and community programming of this Saint Paul City Park since 1998. The display of 16 sculptures by artists from throughout the United States is anchored by a 70-foot tall sculpture by the eminent American sculptor Mark di Suvero. In 2009, Public Art Saint Paul commissioned two new sculptures for the park. Artist Mary

Johnson's *Max Rabbitat*, is 14-foot tall and weighs 2,000 pounds. His cement hide is embedded Gaudi-like with found objects such as marbles, toys, and car parts as well as cement discs decorated by neighborhood children. A rabbit-themed dedication ceremony welcomed *Max Rabbitat* and children enjoyed carrot cupcakes, bunny nose face painting, and, of course, a conga line bunny hop led by Public Art Saint Paul's education coordinator Ashley Hanson.

Democracy Speaks: The New Freedom Monument, by John Hock and Andrew MacGuffie is affectionately nicknamed "Yellow Yeller" for the bright color of this 30-foot long painted steel megaphone. Appropriately pointed towards the State Capitol, it offers a chance to respond loudly and clearly to the question "If you could tell your government one thing, what would it be?"

Western Park is providing a temporary home for *Muscle*, a playful 26-foot tall sculpture by Amy Toscani. It was commissioned by Public Art Saint Paul in 2004, with support from the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation, for 4th Street near the Farmer's Market. Central Corridor construction recently required its

temporary removal and it is expected to return "home" in 2013. *Muscle's* archway legs are topped by a bulbous organic shape capped by a whirligig. It is happily spinning in the Western Sculpture Park breezes!

Last fall, Public Art Saint Paul worked with Saint Paul Parks and Recreation and the Summit University Planning Council to sponsor a community gardening day in Western Park. Volunteers of all ages contributed to planting, watering, and mulching in preparation for the winter months.

When The PAsPider made its grand entry in June, *Max Rabbitat*, "Yellow Yeller" and an abundance of greenery and flowers were ready for art making fun to begin.



SUMMER PROGRAMMING

PASPIDer

EEK! Public Art Saint Paul's PASPIDer has returned to Western Sculpture Park! This kinetic structure and mobile art lab crawls into the park weekly throughout the summer. Rolling its 8 googly eyes and extending its 8 creepy legs, it forms a webbed canopy for free workshops taught by local artists.

Created by artist Christopher Lutter-Gardella, the PASPIDer is made from recycled materials collected from the waste stream—salvaged aluminum tubing, window screen scraps, and bicycle parts. Participants, mainly children from apartments adjacent to the park, gleefully hail its arrival for an afternoon of eco-friendly art-making.

300 kids of all ages are served by the PASPIDer program, with average around 60 attendees each session, some newcomers, others seasoned regulars. Each three-hour session offers a casual atmosphere, allowing participants to come and go as they please. The 2010 summer schedule includes twelve workshops in music, storytelling, dance, sculpture, and all sorts of crafts. All projects



utilize natural and recycled materials as well as repurposed items like fabric scraps, egg cartons, and chip bags.

Last year, during planning of the workshops, Public Art Saint Paul collaborated with local



businesses and residents to conceptualize how the PASPIDer could best serve the neighborhood. Its development came from a partnership between the thriving community along with local banks, apartment managers, and residents passing out flyers, volunteering at workshops, and cleaning the park.

"The need for the workshops is so great in Western Park because there is no rec center between I-94 and University Avenue," said Ashley Hanson, Public Art Saint Paul's Education Coordinator. "In order for the kids to get to any kind of free programming, they have to cross one of the busiest highways or avenues in the city. For some of the kids, the PASPIDer is the only thing to look forward to all summer because it's free and in their backyard."



Each workshop, Hanson watches kids develop their artistic skills while building relationships with each other. "It's rewarding to know that we are filling a need. The kids demonstrate such a hunger for the arts—they show up early and watch us set up,"



Hanson said. "We are a reliable resource for the kids. We come to them without fail." Eleven year-old Nereida Peña says if she wasn't at a workshop, she'd be watching TV at home. "The spider is fun, and it gives me something to do," she said. Salma Matan,

age ten, echoed Nereida's enthusiasm: "In summer, I have nothing to do. The spider is cool." Both Salma and Nereida agree that the workshops have helped them get to know their neighbors.

Stewardship of Western Park's sculpture display is integral to the PASPIDer education program. Each workshop includes a tour of the park and information about the sculptures, their artists and their upkeep. Kids learn what to do if they see someone approach a sculpture with a pen, or if they find garbage on the ground. "The kids who attend the workshops are really protective over the sculptures. The workshops have raised awareness and helped mitigate vandalism," Hanson said.

The PASPIDer hibernates after the summer, but its lessons of the value of sculpture, community building and creativity live on. PASP volunteers make the program possible, and we can never have enough help.

To get involved, contact Ashley Hanson by phone at 651-290-0921 or email at ashley@publicartstpaul.org.



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT

Education Superstars Pat Black and Debra Hunt

Textile artist and seasoned arts educator Pat Black brings her valuable perspective on education and community building to planning Public Art Saint Paul's education programs. Pat helps conceptualize the PASPider workshops' format, recruits teaching artists, and keeps the PASPider stocked with art supplies. She's always ready with a fresh idea for hands-on art, whether it's turning an empty chip bag into a bracelet or making life-size self-portraits out of cardboard. For Pat, our educational efforts are about making resources and opportunities for art available to communities in a fun, welcoming way.

"Real relationships mean something for real change," Pat said. "People care about what you care about, and Public Art Saint Paul cares about the art. And the people." She focuses on developing a sense of citizenship among young people. In 2008, she worked with the YWCA Kids' Club teaching public art stewardship and introducing participants to sculptures in their neighborhoods as they created brilliant clay murals and pop up books. Her enthusiasm for arts education funnels a powerful energy into our mission. Thanks, Pat!



Debra Hunt is another star player on Public Art Saint Paul's educational team. As an educational consultant, Debra led us to develop a formal education program, culminating in the PASPider workshops. "I wanted to create a clear, intentional education initiative," Debra said. An artist and an experienced arts education consultant, Debra has worked with the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, the Perpich Center for Arts Education, and the Minnesota State Arts Board.

"I'm interested in the idea of public art as civic engagement," she said. "I volunteer with Public Art Saint Paul because of the people and because the organization does a lot with very little. We're always doing very interesting and unusual projects." Debra has especially enjoyed Wishes for the Sky and stewardship of Western Sculpture Park. "Everyone puts their heart and soul in their work," she said. Perhaps no one more than Debra.

Thank you for your hard work, Deb!



THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR PUBLIC ART PLAN:

An Opportunity for Far-Reaching Creativity

Christine Podas-Larson

Public Art Saint Paul has been awarded a major grant from the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative to develop a Public Art Plan for the Central Corridor that connects Saint Paul, Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota.

This multi-jurisdictional Art Plan is being undertaken through Public Art Saint Paul's partnership with the City of Saint Paul, the City of Minneapolis Art in Public Places Program, the University of Minnesota Public Art on Campus Program, the Saint Paul on the Mississippi Design Center, Ramsey County, and the Capitol Region and Ramsey Washington Regional Watershed Districts.

Together these Partners are seeking an Art Plan consultant whose broad artistic thinking and strategic understanding will create an extraordinary and *artful* Art Plan that is expansive in its multi-jurisdictional scope, in its vision for art in multiple media, in its caring for the voices of the community, and in its sustainability within a dynamic urban environment.

An RFQ for the consultant has been issued nationally and the consultant will be selected in September and contracted by Public Art Saint Paul to begin work in October.

The Metropolitan Council's Central Corridor LRT project has engaged visual artists to create public art at the Project's 18 new stations and platforms. This Art Plan seeks to go beyond the LRT public art program in scope, range of artistic media, and time frame. The Art Plan will articulate a vision for art in multiple media and move beyond the stations and platforms to consider the entire public realm: public



buildings, the streetscape, landmarks, pathways, parks and open spaces, and water quality infrastructure. It will engage neighborhoods, educational institutions, and economic and cultural centers and envision opportunities for public art in future private sector transit oriented-developments.

The experience of Central Corridor LRT ridership transcends governmental and institutional boundaries and the rail line itself. Public art has a vital role to play in shaping the form and experience of the Corridor for those in passage and for those who live, work, shop, and go to school in neighborhoods along the Corridor.

Ultimately, the Partners have the capacity to provide financial and process resources for Public Art Plan implementation. The cities mandate funding for public art in their capital developments; the University commissions art for its Twin Cities Campus; Public Art Saint Paul provides significant private support for artist initiatives in the public realm.

The Public Art Plan will engage the community's creative voice and expand ideas about public art and its value to the community.

PUBLIC ART SAINT PAUL BOARD MEMBER

Developing the Role of Public Artists

Craig Amundsen

A new commitment to art's power to transform communities was launched in 1967, when Alexander Calder's sculpture *La Grand Vitesse* was installed in Grand Rapids, Michigan with the first NEA grant for Art In Public Places. This commitment grew as Federal, State, County and municipal jurisdictions added percent for art legislation to their books. Advocacy for public investment in art was at a peak in 1987, the year Public Art Saint Paul was established.

For over twenty years, Public Art Saint Paul has championed the involvement of artists in shaping our public places and infrastructure. More importantly, we have supported artists in taking risks to develop the "state of the art." When we started, the field of public art had begun to realize the potential for public artists to go well beyond the notion of art as object to art as site-specific installation and public place itself.

Siah Armajani, who was recently named the McKnight Foundation's distinguished artist, saw public art as an act of democracy. In the *Humphrey Garden* on the University of Minnesota west bank campus, dedicated in 1988, Armajani included these words of Hubert H. Humphrey, "Freedom is hammered out of the anvil of discussion, debate, dissent."



Many of the artists Public Art Saint Paul has supported developed these ideas in projects like *The Saint Paul Cultural Garden*, led by artist Cliff Garten in collaboration with six poets from diverse cultures, and in Mears Park co-designed by artist Brad Goldberg. *The Cultural Garden* gives voice to the many who founded and built this city on the Mississippi. Mears Park speaks to the value we place on the natural environment and its place in our identity.

Since that time, the relationship of public art to civic life in Saint Paul has grown stronger and more present. Public Art Saint Paul's sponsorship of the Mayor's Design Forum in the late 1990s and the Stone Carving Symposium in 2006 have expanded upon the importance of public engagement in public art to build a stronger sense of community. In 1998 we opened Western Sculpture Park, an idea that emerged from the Mayors Design Forum. Over the ensuing years this public space has become the center of the neighborhood, especially for its youngest citizens.

These are but a few of the many Public Art Saint Paul projects that have put Saint Paul on the cutting edge of defining what public art can be and what it can do to build a stronger community. We continue to look for more effective ways to develop the field of public art. Recently we drafted and supported the adoption of a new public art policy in the City of Saint Paul, expanding the role of artists in making our public spaces more successful, regenerating public life, and building a better city.

Craig Amundsen is a board member and former board chair of Public Art Saint Paul. He is the Deputy Director of the Weisman Art Museum and the Public Art Curator for the University of Minnesota.

SAINT PAULS CITY ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Marcus Young



Can clouds be public art? Can trees be sculpture? Can the moving river and setting sun be our nightly theater?

Why do we not know who we are? Our great inner self goes largely unexplored. Why do we not know each other? Our ways of being together are too plain and too few. Why do we deny death and therefore the unknown abundance of our own lives?

As a community, how do we know if we are happy in this city by the river? Why are we so unpracticed at happiness? What are the civic measures of love, joy, and peace?

Why does art continue to confound us? Why is it so difficult to understand the essential role of beauty? Who is an artist or the Artist?

For me, this litany of questions comes from decades looking in from the outside, wondering if this is the life we really want, and dreaming it to be a different way. From whatever background, don't we all ask these questions, like a child asking "why?"

Four years ago, I was given a remarkable opportunity to be with the City, to be on the inside. The work has been enormously gratifying. It's not wrong, however, to say we are still getting to know one another, still like new friends. For as long as this feeling of unfamiliarity lasts between artist and City, I want to take full advantage of it. Much can come of not knowing much, practicing what Shunryu Suzuki called the "beginner's mind," being unfamiliar and full of possibilities.

Four years ago, I didn't think about public art because I didn't consider myself part of the public. Now, in this position, I have learned a great purpose. I am putting to use decades of accumulated desire to be part of the public and to help shape our life in common. I am interested in our community's healthier relationship with nature and with each other, and in exploring the lived and practiced moment, bringing it closer to the spirit. I am here to help discover public art in these and other essential contexts. Whatever public art will mean for us going forward, I hope we can learn from this wise and touching question posed to the English by the Native American leader Powhatan in 1607: "Why will you take by force what you may have quietly by love?"

As I read over my own questions again, I know these are not the type of questions that can be solved easily. These are the ones we will live with for a long while, ones that require slow, artful answers.

I am happy to have this opportunity to write a few words with each Public Art Saint Paul newsletter. Thank you to all who brought me here and are guiding me to do good work.

*Marcus Young
City Artist in Residence*



This August will celebrate the 5th anniversary of a remarkable and nationally unique program: Saint Paul's City Artist in Residence (CAIR).

PUBLIC ART SAINT PAUL PRESENTS **THE UNIVERSITY**
WING **AVENUE**
YOUNG **HUIE** PROJECT



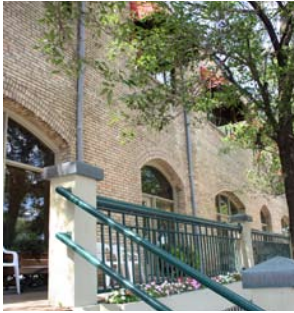
Wing's work is, for me, a meditation on a journey, our journey.

When I saw this photo in the beautiful Minnesota Historical Society book, I was moved to get out my copy of *69 Stations of the Kisokaido Road* and look for people also caught in motion, framed in a unique setting, along a road with a name.

Wing has written a travelogue, a history, a time scale...and yet with timeless images.

-Peter Kramer
Public Art Saint Paul Board of Directors

UPCOMING EVENTS



Public Art Saint Paul Has Moved!

Come see our new office located at

351 Kellogg Blvd E
Saint Paul, MN 55101

More space and amenities to help us better serve our community.



Wednesday's With Wing

Every Wednesday during The University Avenue Project's 6 month run, Wing will be at the Project(ion) site at 8pm for a pre-show question and answer with the audience.



The University Avenue Project Cabarets

Join us on the last Saturday of each month at 7pm for a free Community Cabaret showcasing local talent and performers at the Project(ion) site- 1433 University Avenue.



PASPider and Western Sculpture Park

Enjoy the new sculptures in the park, and make sure to join us on Tuesdays and select Saturdays for free eco-friendly art-making with local artists under the PAsPider.

Look online for the full PAsPider schedule.



Public Art Stewardship

This summer help our stewardship corps of over 200 volunteer community members who keep an eye on the condition and raise awareness of public art in your neighborhood.



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